GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2120
ANSWERED ON:27.08.2007
TARGET FOR RURAL SUBSCRIBERS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has fixed a target to cover all the rural subscribers by 2010 with Fixed/Mobile telephone services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to meet the target;

(d) whether the number of villages covered by WLL technology is giving poor service to the subscribers;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (c) New Telecom Policy, 1999 (NTP-99) envisaged a target of 4% teledensity in rural areas by the year 2010. As again the same, the rural teledensity is 6.45% as on 30.06.2007.

The steps taken for providing better telecom services in the rural areas of the country include inter alia:-

(i) Support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for provisioning of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in all the 1685 net cost positive Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).
(ii) USOF support for providing Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in 66,822 undisputed accessible and inhabited villages having population more than 100 by November 2007.
(iii) Large-scale deployment of WLL network in rural areas.
(iv) Support from USOF for the innovative scheme of sharing of infrastructure by USO Fund to set up by 7871 number of infrastructure sites (towers) spread over 500 districts in the country.

(d) The telephone connections provided on Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology in the villages are generally working satisfactorily. Sometimes, due to poor availability of electricity in the villages, the in-built battery of the telephone terminal in customer premises gets discharged affecting the services to the customers. However, on charging the battery in such cases, the services get restored.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

(f) Following steps have been taken by BSNL to improve the WLL services to the subscribers.

(i) Arrangements are being made at Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) telephone exchanges for charging battery of Fixed Wireless Terminals (FWTs).
(ii) The Switch Mode Power Supply unit (SMPS) with higher battery back up are being used with FWTs deployed in rural areas where there is poor electricity supply.
(iii) Do's and Don'ts have been issued to the customers to increase their awareness on proper use of FWTs.
(iv) WLL equipments have been placed under Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) with equipment suppliers.
(v) Additional Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) are planned to enhance the coverage of WLL systems.